

Kent School of Social Work PhD Program Course Descriptions and Schedules

The program requires a total of 56 credit hours, 50 of which are doctoral level course credit hours plus six dissertation hours. The core curriculum consists of required courses that include advanced research design and analysis, theory development, policy analysis, change theories, ethics, teaching in social work, and professional seminars.

Students will successfully complete the core curriculum (41 credit hours), an Individualized Plan of Study (9 credit hours), the Comprehensive Examination (no credit hours), and the Dissertation (six credit hours). For the Individualized Plan of Study, students can either complete independent studies with faculty (in or outside the Kent School) or take doctoral level courses in another department. To have the individualized plan of study credit hours approved, the student must submit a proposal form to the PhD Program Office. After director approval, the form is submitted to the UofL Registrar who then adds an independent study course to the online catalog prior to student registration.

The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to provide a format in which students can demonstrate their abilities to apply and integrate the whole of their educational experiences by adequately addressing complex questions pertinent to the current and developing knowledge base of social work. Students are eligible to write their examinations upon successful completion of all required and individualized courses. Following the passage of the exam, students are admitted to Candidacy status after the Program Director submits results to the Graduate School. Once students are in candidacy, they register annually for DOCT 600 (two credit hours) through the semester of their oral dissertation defense. After the initial semester registration, the Graduate School automatically enrolls students.

The course descriptions below include the credit hours in parentheses.

Course Descriptions

SW 769: Advanced Research & Design Analysis I (ARDA I) (6) The integration of statistics and quantitative research methods demonstrates how theoretical perspectives drive research questions, measurement concepts, sampling and research designs, and how to determine appropriate statistical procedure.

SW 770: Advanced Research & Design Analysis II (ARDA II) (6) Students demonstrate that they can initiate research using the conceptual, methodological, statistical, and both quantitative and qualitative research methods studied in ARDA I.

SW 771: Advanced Research & Design Analysis III (ARDA III) (3) Students focus on (a) guided research, (b) developing detailed research agendas, and/or (c) in-depth study of particular analytic procedures to be used in research.

SW 772: Advanced Qualitative Research I (3). This course examines the philosophical foundations and epistemological perspectives involved in qualitative research and includes study of traditions and methods (narrative inquiry, case studies, phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography); scientific and ethical issues; and techniques of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Students will expand upon one of the five qualitative approaches by learning and applying Constructivist Grounded Theory techniques to the analysis of data.

SW 782: Advanced Qualitative Research II: Data Analysis & Reporting (3). This course focuses on analysis and interpretation in qualitative research. Students will broaden their qualitative data analysis skills by expanding upon traditional Grounded Theory analysis procedures by learning and applying Situational Analysis, Art-Based Practices and Constructivist Grounded Theory techniques to the analysis of data. Course includes the use of qualitative software as an analysis technique and learning strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry, a process which in turn leads to the development of a conceptual formulation and analytic memos, thereby setting the foundation for reporting of findings through presentations and publications.

SW 764: Teaching in Social Work (3). This course engages students in education philosophy with emphasis on professional education, curriculum theory and social work curriculum standards, and instructional theory, methods and technology. Each student will create a social work course from initially surveying a body of relevant literature, choosing content and conceptualizing it, developing lectures, tasks, and assignments. Additionally, each student will serve as teaching assistant in a bachelor or master's course while enrolled and have the opportunity to apply best teaching practices learned in the classroom under faculty mentorship.

SW 755: Theory I: Philosophy of Science, Theory Development & Ethics (3). This course explores the nature of knowledge, how it is generated and acquired. Explanatory and practice theory, current models related to practice, and the relationship of theory and data to social work will be examined. Strategies for building knowledge will be discussed. Students will analyze theories into their components, construct mini-theories, and propose how they can be tested in practice. In addition, the evolution of the concept of ethics will be analyzed in terms of how history shapes and informs current values and their application. Ethical decision-making strategies, ethical dilemmas and issues, and professional accountability will be examined.

SW 757: Theory II: Advanced Analysis of Social Work Problems (3). This course provides students with theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding social problems and their implications for macro social work practice. Critical perspectives related to social science theory will be identified, assumptions assessed, values examined, and empirical evidence analyzed. Theories covered will be drawn from sociological, socio-cultural, political, economic, historical, and other perspectives. Students will be expected to develop their abilities to analyze and critique social problems and macro social work practice.

SW 759: Theory III: Conceptual and Theoretical Model Development (3). The purpose of this course is to develop skills in conceptualizing latent constructs related to social work research and practice that impact the lives of clients and the systems. Students will learn how to create constructs that reflect new innovations in theoretical and model construction that advance their substantive areas. In addition, students will learn to develop causal conceptual models that provide a theoretical explanation detailing the potential and causal linkages between various social and psychological factors specific to the person and their environment.

SW 773: Measurement and Theoretical Model Testing (3). This course builds on the work developed in SW 759. Students will extend the development of their theoretical conceptual models by operationalizing conceptualizations. Using the rapid instrument development model, students will learn to create measures to develop skills in establishing the reliability and validity of measures. Additionally, students will use methods and forms analyses learned to evaluate and test elements of the theoretical model proposed.

SW 762: Research Practicum (3). Students engage in independent study research to gain hands-on experience in the conceptualization, implementation of a research project or data collection and analysis. This course is in addition to the other Independent Study courses.

SW 756: Professional Seminar I & SW 758 Professional Seminar II (1 for each class; total 2). The purpose of this course is to introduce doctoral students to academia, particularly professional development practices that lead to becoming successful social work faculty in colleges and universities. Students are introduced to best professional development practices, develop their own professional development plan, receive coaching and mentoring on developing their CVs, submitting abstracts, making peer reviewed presentations, and publishing in scholarly journals. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to learn about preparing for the job market, interviewing for faculty positions, and working in an academic setting. Students will have the opportunity to dialogue about faculty professional development, research agenda, teaching focus, and service commitments as well as best practices for success.

SW 797: Individualized Study Plan (3 for each class or independent study course; total 9). These credit hours are devoted to students' individual research and teaching interests and may include additional methodological and statistical courses offered in other schools on campus approved by the social work doctoral program. Students are strongly encouraged to take courses outside the Kent School that are consistent with their professional development plan or pursue independent studies with faculty with whom they have not yet worked closely.

SW 799: Dissertation (6). The dissertation includes the design and implementation of a major research project, the results of which are expected to contribute to the social work knowledge base. This is the course linked to student comprehensive examination preparation; although no credit is received for the class, the six hours are required for a student to remain enrolled for full-time status in order to use University resources and receive funding for tuition, health insurance, stipend, etc.

Course Schedule (in class Thursdays and Fridays)

Year	Semester	Course
1	Fall	SW 755: Theory I-Philosophy of Science, Theory & Ethics
		SW 772: Advanced Qualitative Research I
		SW 769: Advanced Research Design & Analysis I
	Spring	SW 757 Theory II-Advanced Analysis of Social Work Problems
		SW 782: Advanced Qualitative Research II
		SW 770: Advanced Research & Design Analysis II
2	Summer	SW 797: Individualized Study Plan (6 hours)
	Fall	SW 759: Theory III-Conceptual & Theoretical Model Development
		SW 771: Advanced Research & Design Analysis III
		SW 797: Individualized Study Plan (3 hours)
		SW 756: Professional Seminar I
	Spring	SW 773: Measurement and Theoretical Model Testing
		SW 762: Research Practicum
		SW 764: Teaching in Social Work
		SW 758: Professional Seminar II
	3	Summer
Fall		Doctoral Candidacy-ABD
Spring		Doctoral Candidacy-ABD
4	Summer	Doctoral Candidacy-ABD
	Fall	Doctoral Candidacy-ABD
	Spring	Doctoral Candidacy-ABD/Defend Dissertation

